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SALON "HONORS."

THE awards at the Paris Salon this year are on the whole so phenomenally grotesque that, if human and artistic affairs were directed by reason and logic, here would certainly be an end of the institution of medals and honorable mentions and the rest of it. Unfortunately there is every probability that the institution will continue, and that the exhibitors at the Salon will go on to the end of their lives running after medals and prizes so like so many schoolboys, who depend more on influence than on merit, and who bribe their masters with cakes and invitations to dinner and timely bouquets.

First of all the Medal of Honor, in the section of painting has been given to M. Cormon, for his cold, academic and absolutely mediocre picture, "The Victors of Salamis."—Certainly the painting of so-called historical subjects is not to be despised, but the art of resuscitating the dead is a difficult art, and few, thanks to a mysterious heredity, have been able rarely to recover the accents of ancient days. Henry Leys was naturally retrospective; Alma-Tadema is unconscious of modernity; one of the greatest works of the nineteenth century is Delacroix' "Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople," now seen in the Louvre. M. Cormon desires to be retrospective. In "The Victors of Salamis" he would fain be Greek. In reality he is lifeless and motionless, and the victory he paints is a wingless victory, which has found favor neither in the eyes of the critics nor of the public.

The Medal of Honor for sculpture was well awarded to Emmanuel Fremiet, whose exhibits year after year have been so remarkable that we may look upon him as a worthy successor of the great Barye.

For engraving, the Medal of Honor ought by merit to have been awarded without hesitation to Koepping for his etching after Rembrandt. Unfortunately, Koepping is a German, and the medal was given to Courtry.

In the section of painting no first-class medals were awarded. Second-class medals were given to Saintin, Buland, Doucet, Beyle, Fourié, Carrière, Courant, A. Berton, Joseph Bail, Desbrosses, Michelena, Félix Lucas, Thiollot, Guignard, Morlon. Third-class medals to Meunier, Thurner, Tanzi, Chigot, Loustanaud, Eugène Claude, Mauve, Galerne, Maurice Eliot, Mlle. Rongier, Miss Gardner, Aviat, Chaperon, Junenez, Vauthier, De Payer, Edmond Picard, Cagniard, Lesur, Scherrer, Girardot, Marty, Stephen Jacob, Mlle. Bilinska, Arus, Dufur, Busson, Deyrolle.

This list is rendered ridiculous by the presence in it of the name of Miss Elizabeth Gardner, over the production of whose work a mystery has always hovered. It is said that certain New York dealers buy Miss Gardner's pictures simply because they believe that M. Bouguereau has painted on them, if he has not painted them entirely; and they sell these pictures to their customers with the express understanding that they contain work by the great Bouguereau. It is unpleasant to have to say disagreeable things about a lady; but it is nevertheless my conviction that Miss Gardner's painting is, to a very great extent, humbug. There is not a single member of the jury of the Salon who is not thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances, and who is not aware of the effective artistic protection accorded by M. Bouguereau to his charming next-door neighbor. Even since the thirty per cent tariff has been imposed on foreign pictures imported into America, the French artists have retaliated by refusing to award any medals to American exhibitors, however great their merits. This prohibition has been at length raised, and, after three years' boycotting, a medal has been awarded to—Miss Gardner! This is simply ridiculous, and it is only just that the public should be informed of the real facts of the case.

Among the Honorable Mentions awarded in the section of painting I note the following American names: Carroll Beckwith, Julian Story, Mrs. Chadwick, C. S. Reinhardt, Miss Robbins, Hitchcock, and Ch. H. Davis, the landscapist. In the section of sculpture Mr. Van der Kempf obtained an honorable mention for his group of St. Julian l'Hospitalier.

And so here is an end of the Salon of 1887, and the great lesson the American exhibitors may learn from it is, that it is useless to waste their efforts in painting big Salon pictures with a view to winning a medal. The Salon medals are not intended for American artists. They are reserved for Miss Gardner; and the next candidate who has any chance for a medal, now that Bouguereau's protégée has been provided for, is pretty Miss Robbins, the protégée of the great Carolus-Duran.

PARIS, June 1, 1887.

THEODORE CHILD.

My Note Book.

Leonato.—Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

Don John.—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

—Much Ado About Nothing.

THE Van Marcke drama is making slow but sure progress to an interesting dénouement. The story told in "My Note Book," last month, has excited the liveliest interest among picture-buyers throughout the country. Several have sent me particulars about their own Van Marckes with a view to their verification, and other collectors are cordially invited to follow this example. More than one has denounced in the strongest terms "the scoundrel" who is popularly believed to be responsible for the "Van Marcke" in the Halsted sale.

* * *

MR. OEHME, of Messrs. L. Knoedler & Co., deemed the matter of such importance that he recovered the Halsted picture from the mysterious purchaser to whom he had sold it, and took it with him, when he sailed for France, on June 11th. For reasons of his own he preferred this course to accepting the bold challenge of Mr. Briggs contained in the following letter:

To the Editor of the Tribune:

SIR: The Tribune recently stated that its suggestion as to the proper way of settling the matter of "a Van Marcke and its double" had been adopted on one side by Messrs. Knoedler & Co.'s expression of their desire to send both pictures to the artist in Paris, if I will consent. Off-hand this would seem to be a very unnecessary thing to do when there are so many excellent judges of Van Marckes here—gentlemen enough who know the work as they do a familiar handwriting. But, as Messrs. Knoedler & Co. claim to have bought their picture for a Van Marcke (guess they are pretty good judges, too), they probably would not be willing to accept any other decision than that of the great painter himself, and I shall therefore unhesitatingly consent to the sending of my picture abroad on the following conditions, viz., both paintings shall be intrusted to the care of Mr. Montague Marks, of The Art Amateur, to be sent by him to his correspondent in Paris, there to be submitted to Van Marcke; then, whichever picture he (Van Marcke) pronounces bogus shall be destroyed and the genuine picture shall be returned to its owner. Any expenses incurred shall be borne by the owner or party sending the bogus picture. It is taken as a matter of course, and must be admitted for the present at any rate, that one of the pictures in question must be bogus, as the painter declares he never "doubled" the original.

Respectfully yours,

NEW YORK, June 4, 1887.

T. J. BRIGGS.

In view of Mr. Oehme's course, which was adopted by him without any notice to Mr. Briggs or Mr. Marks, the latter gentlemen decided quietly to await developments. Mr. Oehme is expected, at this writing, to send a report from Paris as early as possible to the New York press, and the next act of this little drama is likely to be even more interesting than the first.

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THE Henri Pène du Bois collection, which is being dispersed at auction at Leavitt's, at the present writing, shows a wonderful array of scarce works in every branch of literature and early typography, as well as autographs, book-plates, engravings, and curious water-colors. When one considers that Mr. du Bois is still quite a young man, one is bound to conclude that he must, even in infancy, have been familiar with the arts of the bibliophile. The well-illustrated catalogue, compiled with much care by Mr. Charles Sotheran, is enriched with numerous and accurate notes that will make it a valuable reference-book. It describes, in its first division, the first two vellum copies of books issued by the Grolier Club, the "Decree of Star Chamber" and "Rubaiyat," of Omar Khayyam; Mr. du Bois's own copy of his "Historical Essay on the Art of Book-binding;" De Thou's presentation copy of his history to King Henry IV., bound with the royal arms; Richelieu's "Principaux Points de la Foi Catholique," bound with the arms of Louis XIII., and many other specimens of bindings from the libraries, and with the coats-of-arms of Madame de Pompadour, the Duke of Marlborough, Prince Demidoff, Louis-Philippe, and Napoleon the Third. There are many art-books of value, and manuscripts, missals, and books of hours, among which are to be noted James de Voraigue's "Legenda Aurea," the "Testament de Jehan de Meung," and Hardouyn's "Horæ," unknown to Brunet; also a unique "Histoire de Belle-Isle en Mer," a work of Father Le Gallen that was never printed. In early typography the collection is rich in specimens of the Paris press, containing Meschinot's "Lunettes des Princes;" the best text of "Montaigne;" the first book on French poetry; a Jehan Marot; a "Le Maire des Belges;" the "Ordonnances," printed by Galliot du Pré. The department of books on books is, perhaps, the most complete

in this country, and, as book-collectors are only human, it will please many to know that it is broken. Mr. Pène du Bois, who loved the art of the binder well enough to devote his leisure hours in Paris to a study of its workmanship in the shops of Lortic and Chambolle-Duru, has been fastidious in his bindings. They are the work of Derome, Bozerian, Thouvenin, Trautz-Bauzonnet, Lortic, Simier, Belz-Niedrée, Chambolle-Duru, Smeers, Rivière. He had a specimen from every modern book-binder of note. It had been his caprice long before the collectors of this country had caught the contagion, and his fellow-bibliophiles expressed their appreciation of the fact by paying \$100, on the first day of the sale, for "The Historical Essay on the Art of Book-binding," published by the Bradstreet Press, in 1883, that he had written, little thinking it would make him an authority in biblioepy.

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EX-GOVERNOR ALGER, of Michigan, is said to have paid \$50,000 for Munkacsy's "Death of Mozart." There really seems to be no limit to the folly of our rich Americans when they embark in picture-buying. In Paris, the great art centre of the world, there is no connoisseur who would give 50,000 francs for any picture Munkacsy ever painted. Here, the clever, sensational panoramic canvases of the facile Hungarian are characteristically judged by their size, and are supposed to be the greatest art works of the age. The shrewd Mr. Sedelmeyer understands this very well, and is not slow to profit by our ignorance. Ex-Governor Alger was probably the one man in this country who reaped any substantial advantage from his acquaintance with him, and that was by making him pay \$8000 forfeit for failing to deliver the "Christ before Pilate" for \$90,000. Mr. Sedelmeyer had agreed to do this, but, it seems, could not resist Mr. Wanamaker's tempting offer of \$100,000. The Governor, however, was not allowed to retain his advantage many weeks. He paid it back with big interest when he bought the "Death of Mozart."

* * *

NEXT winter, Mr. Sedelmeyer, I am credibly informed, will open a shop in New York, and establish himself here regularly in the picture trade. Through Mr. Munkacsy's social introductions he already knows many wealthy picture-buyers in this country, and no doubt he will prosper and make many ducats. Conjointly with Messrs. Ortgies & Co., the auctioneers, he will occupy the two-story building now going up in Fifth Avenue, on the vacant lot adjoining the A. T. Stewart mansion. The opening of the new galleries, I am told, will be an "event" in the art world. "Christ before Pilate," Munkacsy's "great religious picture," will be thrown completely in the shade by his "Christ on Calvary," which, I understand, it is proposed to "boom" on this occasion, and which, as the very latest arrival, will, of course, become the greatest religious picture of the age.

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ONE of the "conditions of sale" printed in the Richard H. Halsted catalogue of paintings, sold at Chickering Hall on January 10th, was the following:

"4. The sale of any Painting is not to be set aside on account of any error in the description. All are exposed for Public Exhibition one or more days, and are sold just as they are, without recourse."

Nevertheless, I venture to assert that if No. 45, attributed to Van Marcke, should be repudiated by that artist as a forgery, an innocent buyer of that picture at the sale would have little difficulty in recovering his money.

* * *

FRAUDS in pictures go on unchecked. It seems only the other day that everybody, whether or not concerned about art, was talking of the Corot-Trouillebert affair in Paris. Since then there have been notable frauds on the reputations of Th. Rousseau, de Neuville and Volon; and now M. Eudel brings to light a pretty little trick that has been played with a painting on a panel by Fromentin. The panel had been sold at auction, and, its first owner's name being well-known as that of an enlightened amateur, it was marked on the back, as is customary, with his seal in red wax. The purchaser had the panel sawn in two, and had the picture copied on the new panel thus obtained, and which had the seal on the back. He had then two Fromentins instead of one: the real one, which he disposed of on its merits, and the false, which he sold without difficulty, on the strength of the first owner's seal.

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THE gentleman who has suffered by this piece of roguery has also, according to M. Eudel, been made